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SUBJECT: IRANIAN CHIEF JUSTICE VISITS SENEGAL

REF: Dakar 1655

SUMMARY

1. (U) On July 28, President Wade met with Ayatollah Mahmoud Hashemi Sharoudi, Chief of the Judiciary of Iran and Mohamed Reza Baghrei, Special Envoy of President Ahmadinejad in Dakar. Before departing Senegal on July 29, Sharoudi gave a press conference highlighting Iranian cooperation with Senegal, including the creation of a new organization, the International Union of Islamic Countries, which Iran hopes to formally launch during the next Islamic Conference (OIC) Summit, scheduled to take place in Dakar in March 2008. Sharoudi promoted Iranian Sharia law. Iranian-Senegalese economic cooperation was discussed with Iran reportedly offering training for nuclear experts and the construction of a new petroleum refinery. Also highlighted was cooperation in education and GOI support for the current investment in an auto and truck assembly plant by Iranian automaker Khodro. END SUMMARY.

MORE PROMISES

2. (U) During a July 28-29 visit to Dakar, Senior Iranian officials Ayatollah Mahmoud Hashemi Sharoudi, Chief of the Judiciary of Iran and Mohamed Reza Baghrei, Special Envoy of President Ahmadinejad presented the Iranian goal of creating a new organization, the International Union of Islamic Countries, which Iran hopes to formally launch during the next Islamic Conference (OIC) Summit, scheduled to take place in Dakar in March 2008. Sharoudi noted this union will allow Islamic countries to resist pressure from entities such as the European Union, "harmonize differences" in positions between Islamic countries, and "restore the great Islamic civilization." Sharoudi also indicated Iran will hold an international meeting within four months to further the project, which he claims already has a Secretariat in place in Teheran and the backing of forty countries. On judicial cooperation, Sharoudi noted Iran has harmoniously integrated Sharia Islamic Law into its legal system and could share Iran's experience with Senegal and other Muslim countries.

3. (U) President Wade, in giving his account of the meetings between his government and Ayatollah Mahmoud Hashemi Sharoudi, Chief of the Judiciary of Iran and Mohamed Reza Baghrei, Special Envoy of President Ahmadinejad, directed his cabinet to prepare an Iran-Senegal cooperation committee as soon as possible. According to local press, Wade stated Iranian authorities made the commitment to implement "all agreements signed with Senegal." Wade asserted Iran will:

-- accelerate the construction of the Khodro car assembly plant near Thies (historically a stronghold for opposition to Wade's ruling PDS party);

-- construct a new petroleum refinery and a petrochemical plant in Senegal;

-- host Senegalese experts to study Iran's agricultural system;
-- build vocational schools in Senegal;
-- assist Senegal in preparation for the upcoming OIC Summit,
scheduled for March 2008 in Dakar;
-- contribute USD 100 million to the IOC Solidarity Fund for the
reduction of poverty; and
-- in support of Wade's proposal to build a civilian nuclear power
plant in the Casamance, provide scholarships to Senegalese students
to specialize in nuclear physics.

14. (U) In June, Iran's Export Development Bank announced plans to
front USD 40.6 million to Senegal's national power company (Senelec)
for the construction of a power transmission line that will provide
electricity to more than 200,000 people in the cities of Tobene,
Touba, Tivaouane and Kaolack, as well as other upgrades to the
country's electrical grid.

COMMENT

15. (SBU) President Wade's grand plan to build a nuclear power plant
is very much more likely dream than reality, although he could
believe it enough to follow-up on Iran's offer to provide some
degree of technical nuclear training to Senegalese citizens. [Note:
as reported in reftel, French President Sarkozy also paid lip
service to the possibility of assisting Senegal's "nuclear program."
End note.] Since Wade's election in 2000, several official visits
have been made by Iranian and Senegalese officials, including heads
of state. However, we have seen few indications of serious movement
on the numerous economic agreements signed. For instance, promises
to upgrade Senelec have not yet materialized. Over the past two

DAKAR 00001725 002 OF 002

years, Iran has certainly raised its profile as a potential
development partner for Senegal, but it's not yet clear if the
official visits and promises of cooperation will succeed in steering
Senegal towards Iran's international objectives.

SMITH